



Senate Bill 299 – Children's Districts

In Opposition

Chair Burdick, Vice Chair Boquist, Senators Riley, Findley, Wagoner

The Oregon Women's Rights Coalition considers the welfare of children an important issue.

Forming a separate district to provide for children's activities, however, raises some concern.

The proposed legislation would allow a separate district to be formed for children's activities. The bill, however, does not follow ORS statutes for the number of signatures required for petitioning for a district. Current ORS 198.755 requires 15 percent of the electors to sign for creation of a district. For this district, the number of electors is reduced to 10 percent.

January registered voters in Washington County number 385,304. The number of signatures needed under current law would be 57,796 but under the provisions of the bill the number would be 38,530. That is nearly 20,000 signatures less than current law.

In addition to that concern, if the district is formed, dollars for this district would go to pay for elections for the board members in addition to the children's activities.

While under this bill property taxes for education have been protected, this legislation does not protect the property taxes for general government.

Creation of a new district sharing the general government portion of our property tax system could have the effect of decreasing the dollars available for public safety, fire and in some areas parks where they are under the auspices of the city and county.

Until our property tax system is reformed, any additional "government" entities created should be closely examined to make sure that the services the "government" proposes to provide could not be provided under public, private or non-programs for the same population.

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